DECEMBER 1957

The Reformed Journal

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Book Review

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Mary and Jesus

by Henry Stob

AMONG the differences that distinguish our Church from that of Rome is the difference in the way we view the mother of Jesus. There is among us no Mary-cult. We fail to find any warrant in Scripture for exalting her to the rank of mediatrix. Were sinful men and women able to exercise the mediator's function there could hardly be a doubt of Mary's ability to perform it. We may suppose that few in the Kingdom of God stood as close to the Savior as she. Yet sinful men and women cannot effect a reconciliation between God and man. Their sin stands in the way. All of them are themselves in need of the Sinless One, the only mediator, Jesus Christ. And Mary was in need of Him too. If we are to honor her, therefore, we are not to honor her for any assumed qualities and powers of mediatorship, nor for a sinlessness falsely supposed, but merely for that to which is owing the immortality of her name: the fact that she, from among all the women of the world, was chosen by God to be the mother of the Son of Man, a distinction for which all generations of men have called and shall call her blessed.

THE BIOGRAPHICAL data at our command is insufficient to reconstruct the life of Mary. We know nothing about her appearance and nothing about the early years of her life. However much we should like to satisfy our curiosity on these points, the Bible does not accommodate us. It does not do this in the case of other persons either. It is reticent even about our Lord. There is nowhere in the Bible a description of Jesus' physical appearance, and from the Scriptures we learn next to nothing about His youth. The Bible relates but two events out of the time before His public appearance — His flight to Egypt and His dispute in the Temple — and leaves us for the rest quite in the dark. Even after He begins His ministry we learn little of His personal habits.

This is because the Bible is something other than a biographical source-book. In events and experiences it takes an interest only in so far as they reveal and elucidate that relation of God to man which is its great theme. This determines the extent of its interest in Mary. Mary occupies a prominent place in the first chapter of Luke's Gospel not because she is beautiful or ugly, rich or poor, clever or dull, interesting or uninteresting, but because she occupies a prominent place in God's dealings with the world, because in God's redemptive plan for man she was His chosen instrument. She appears before us, therefore, not in her personal, but in her religious significance. Therein lies her worth and her importance.

MARY belonged, we know, to that small group of pious Israelites in whom the hope of the promised Messiah burned as a flame. Their number was not large and they lived for the most part in quiet and retired places. There were other groups in Israel, and they too awaited the Messiah, but their hope had become formal, traditional, political. The Pharisees lived for the most part in the present, too engaged in keeping the minutiae of the Law to gaze long and steadfastly toward the future from whence the Deliverer was to come. The Sadducees had political ambitions, and when they thought of the Savior at all it was in connection with their plans for the restoration of Israel's fortunes and the creation of an invincible kingdom.

How much warmer, more vital, and more personal was the hope of Mary and her group! Whatever alien elements may have mingled with their conceptions, at the center of their longings was a personal Savior who should save them from their sins. They — Mary, Elizabeth, Zacharias, Anna, Simeon, and others whom the Christmas stories mention — they had read of Him in the Scriptures and always they looked for the sign of His coming. He, though their sins be as scarlet, would make men white as snow, they had read. The bruised reed He would not break and the smoking flax He would not quench. As a shepherd He would take the lambs in His arms, and tenderly care for those with young. Despised and rejected, He would bear men's griefs and carry their sorrows. He would be wounded for their transgressions and bruised for their iniquities, and with His stripes they would be healed. These Scriptures this pious group of watchers appropriated and laid up. And because they knew they needed healing, and in the measure that they knew it, they waited, and watched, and prayed.

Millenia had gone since the day Christ's coming was first foretold. Always He seemed to tarry. Yet the confidence of these believers did not waver. Had not God promised? And can God lie? Yet it was not easy to believe. In former days there had been many prophets and each of them had come with a message that helped to keep the hope alive. But now for five centuries no prophet had appeared in Israel. God seemed to have withdrawn from

His people, and to have left them to their fortunes. And those fortunes were by no means reassuring. Caesar's legions patrolled the promised land, priests defiled their office with bribes and compromises, Pharisees tithed mint and cummin while forgetting righteousness and love, and men everywhere were forgetting God. The times were very inauspicious.

AND THEN one day an angel appeared to Mary. We do not read that she was frightened at his appearance. We do read that she was troubled at his words. "Hail, thou that are highly favoured," he had said, "the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." We can imagine her perplexity. She favored? She who was but an unknown village maid? She favored of God? She who was so conscious of her sins, whose life fell so constantly and so distressingly short of the ideals that God had set before her, and which she had adopted as her own? Was the Lord with her, whose every effort had been bent to apprehend Him, and who longed so earnestly for her Lord's appearing? What was this that the angel was saying?

Seeing her perplexity Gabriel undertook further to enlighten her. "Thou shalt conceive," he said, "and bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus." Mary's heart must have leaped at that point, for there was cause to rejoice in the angel's words. She was betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the same village, a carpenter by trade, and now the Lord was promising her a child and the high blessing of happy motherhood. What real bride would not rejoice in the assurance, and in the possession of that assurance consider herself indeed blessed among women? And yet there remained one question. She was not yet married, and what really did the angel mean? That was the last question Mary asked.

The answer she received flashed like lightning through her soul. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son o God."

THEN she understood. Then she understoo too, those other words: "And he shall be grea and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and th Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his fathe David; and he shall reign over the house of Jaco forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. She understood, but yet the thing was so breath takingly great it could hardly be grasped. The prom ised Messiah, He on whom the expectations of he people had for millenia been fixed; He, her Lord, fo whose coming she had so passionately prayed He whom the whole world unknowingly longed fo and so sorely needed, the Savior and Redeemer o mankind — He was to be born of her!

There was joy unspeakable in Mary's heart tha day, a joy indescribably great. There was in tha joy a particular quality, too, for none other among women could be so favored as she. Yet it was no a private joy. The child she was to bear was to be the world's; this son was to be the Son of Man. Al peoples and nations and tongues were to bask in His light.

Some, it is true, rejected Him when He appeared, and for them He became a judgment. Into the lives of others, however, He entered with mercy, forgiveness, and peace. What happened when He first came has happened often since. Some, finding Him a rock of offense, have stumbled over Him and have gone on to death. Others, finding Him a strong rock and tower, have been raised by Him into newness of life. He is still today this dual force, set for the rise and fall of many.

What He is to us will determine our attitude toward the day of His birth, and to the many activities that attend it. May we move this Christmas season not in terror from our judge but in gratitude toward our Savior, and may we sing with Mary: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth rejoice in God my Savior."

The Editors and Publisher of the Journal take this occasion to express the wish and prayer that all spiritual blessings in our Lord Jesus Christ may be yours in this hallowed season and in the days of this coming year.

Beyond the Grave

by Mildred Zylstra

IT WAS quarter to twelve, Sunday night, December 2, 1956. I could see the time on my watch by the light of the street-lamps as my husband and I stood on the corner of a street in Amsterdam waiting for a bus. Behind us the lights were reflected like broken moons in the dark waters of the Amstel.

Suddenly Henry exclaimed, "Something is wrong." He put his hands to his heart and slipped to the ground. I knelt beside him, calling his name, trying to feel his pulse. A small crowd of people gathered. "Is he dead?" I cried unbelievingly, but no one could speak English. Then a woman knelt beside me, "I was a sister in the war," she said. "Is he dead?" I cried despairingly. "I cannot tell," she said. "We will call an ambulance."

For an eternity — time had no meaning — I knelt beside him, calling his name. There was no answer. The ambulance came at last. Two men put him on a stretcher and lifted him into the car. They would not let me sit with him. I saw them put the white wool scarf which I had given him that morning for a Sinterklaas present over his face. Then I knew the truth — unbelievable, impossible, devastating truth — Henry, my husband, was dead. But I could not yet believe it. It was unreal, impossible, beyond comprehension, grief beyond bearing.

We drove to a hospital and I was led into a waiting room, a dark waiting room with varnished walls, while a doctor was called. I bit my nails until they bled, praying "O God don't let him die." Timeless moments crept by. At last the doctor entered. He placed a wallet, a watch, and a ring of keys on the table. It was useless to pray the prayer anymore. Henry was dead. This was all that was left — a wallet, a watch, and a ring of keys.

"May I see him?" I said and someone led me to the ambulance. I knelt beside him. His face was still warm. But he was dead. A feeling of such helpless, hopeless despair swept over I could not weep, I could not pray. I knelt there until someone made me leave.

My husband was dead. My life was dead too. But ten miles away, in Amstelveen, our two children were home alone, unaware of the disaster which had swept them out of the calm harbor of sheltered childhood. We had left them five hours earlier, kissing them at the door and telling them we would be home soon. Now their father would never come home again.

The doctor brought me something to drink, but I would not drink. I could not relax: I must force myself to think. I was alone in a strange country. It was one o'clock in the morning. Whom could I call? What must I do? One thing was clear: I must get home to the children.

We had been visiting at the home of a retired professor of the Free University. He was a stranger to us, as were the other people with whom we had spent the evening. I did not know the professor's address, but the doctor found it in the telephone book and called. The professor was in bed, but his son answered and said he would come to the hospital. He took me home in a taxi.

We went in the white gate that Henry had left ajar six hours earlier when he had walked through, alive and well. The wooden shoes that he liked to wear when he went into the garden were lying beside the door. His raincoat was hanging in the hall and his briefcase was on the table. All the inanimate things remained; only the person, the human being who alone mattered, was gone.

I could hear a voice speaking to me as if from some great distance. "My name is Lex," the boy said. "Is there anyone I could call for you?" He helped to make a long distance call to America. Our voices wakened my little girl and she called to me. I went upstairs and she murmured sleepily, "Is Daddy here?" I could not answer. I sat beside her and held her hand until she fell asleep. I sat there motionless, stiff, cold, while the dark hours dragged by. I could not think. The pain in my mind was so unbearable I thought my brain would split with the agony of it. I could only repeat over and over, "God help me."

There are no words to describe agony. Gerard Manley Hopkins has written a sonnet that tells about such a night:

> What hours, O what black hours we have spent
> That night! what sights you, heart, saw; ways
> you went!
> And more must, in yet longer light's delay.
> With witness I speak this. But where I say
> Hours, I mean years, mean life! and my lament
> Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent
> To dearest him that lives alas! away.
> . . . God's most deep decree
> Bitter would have me taste. . . .

At last the dark began to lighten at the windows, but there was no lifting of the darkness in my mind. I had to wake the children and tell them. They would not believe me. Their father had gone

away well and laughing. How could he be dead? I could not believe it myself.

The next three days are a blur of pain. Friends came in and helped me pack and make arrangements to return to America. I could not eat, I could not sleep. I worked mechanically, cleaning out drawers, sorting out clothes to be packed in the trunks. All the things we had shopped for and packed with such care were heaped together. There was no pattern anymore; all pattern, all hopes, all plans had been shattered.

There was a funeral service in Amsterdam. I was so dazed I could not follow the words that were said. On Wednesday we boarded the KLM at Schiphol. As we entered the plane the children looked at me. There had been four of us. One of the girls always sat with Henry, one with me. Hesitantly the older girl sat down beside a stranger and the look on her face as she turned to me was almost more than I could bear. One was missing, would always be missing. The strongest link was gone, our family was broken, the circle was incomplete. Never again would there be completeness. This was the way man's hopes and plans ended — in dust and ashes.

FOR OVER a year Henry had looked forward to going to the Netherlands. He had been invited to come to the Free University as Senior Lecturer in Contemporary English and American Literature under the Fulbright Act. He had not applied for the position; his application had been requested. He felt honored by the invitation and was delighted with the opportunity. He was eager to accept. I was apprehensive. In 1954 he had suffered a heart attack, and I feared he might become ill in a strange country. He was too important to the children, to me, and to the college to risk a long trip with all the uncertainties travelling involved. But he wanted to go. He had earned his Ph.D. degree in Comparative Literature and had worked intensively in Dutch Literature. He knew the language well and had translated several Dutch books: a three-volume work of theology by Schilder, a novel by Arjen Miedema, a commentary on Galatians by Herman Ridderbos, and a long work by Herman Bavinck. He was deeply interested in Calvinism and in the Dutch background of the Christian Reformed Church. He wanted to see for himself how Calvinism manifested itself in the Netherlands, and how vital it was in the churches and the schools of the country.

He wanted, also, to trace his own background, to see the little village in Friesland where his father had been born. When he had been assigned to overseas duty in World War II he had hoped to be sent across the Atlantic. Instead, he was sent to the Philippines and Japan. He wanted to see the Netherlands, for both his parents had been born there; he wanted to see Germany, for he had taught its language and studied its history; he wanted to see England, for his best-loved courses at the college were the courses he taught in English literature. He had a zest for new experience. He put himself wholeheartedly into everything he did. He wanted the experience of living in Europe for a year. He wanted it not only for himself, but for the children. He thought it would be good for their education as well as for his.

I talked to his doctor and asked his advice about going. He thought it would be all right. Henry had made an excellent recovery from the heart attack. In the summer of 1955 he had travelled to the state of Washington to give a series of lectures at a teachers' convention, and the trip had not hurt him. The doctor thought we could accept the appointment.

But I could not quiet my fears. I remember the night I talked with Henry about it. He was willing to stay home for my sake, but I could see how disappointed he was. I prayed about the matter and it seemed to me that God wanted us to go.

Once the decision was made everything seemed to open before us. We rented our house without difficulty. A house was found for us in Amstelveen, a new suburb of Amsterdam, a house and not a third floor apartment with stairs to climb as I had feared. God seemed to be smoothing the path before us. We spent the month of August in preparation, full of anticipation.

We sailed on the *Maasdam* on August 23. The crossing was smooth, none of us were seasick. There were friends on board, a professor and his wife from the University of Michigan. We spent long hours of talk with them, lounging in the deck chairs in the sun, watching the changing blue surface of the water. We ate sumptuously, and slept long hours. We thanked God for His goodness.

On the first of September we arrived in Rotterdam and were taken to a hotel at Noordwijk-aan-Zee, a little town on the North Sea. We spent two weeks there, attending classes in the Dutch language, and listening to lectures on the Netherlands. It was evident at once that Henry knew the language well. He was asked to teach one of the classes and it pleased him to have people think he had been born in the Netherlands. One afternoon we made a trip to the Hague. As we drove through the flat green countryside, veined with silver canals like tracings in a leaf, and listened to the talk of the Hollanders in the bus Henry said, "It's like coming home."

ON SEPTEMBER FIFTEEN we moved into our house in Amstelveen, a new brick house, with a garden full of flowers. Henry spent two days finding schools, Dutch schools, for the children. Then he plunged into work with his usual thor-

ughness. He visited all the libraries in Amsterdam and borrowed English books for his students. He translated a booklet about Peter Stuyvesant. He was interviewed over the radio. He spoke for groups of students at the University.

He had fewer teaching hours than he had in America so he had more time for the children. He took them to Amsterdam and explored the city with them. He found it a fascinating city with its fifty canals curving in rings around the central square, and the fine old seventeenth-century mansions. He loved to wander down the narrow streets, over the bridges, and listen to the ringing music of the huge barrel organs.

On Saturdays we visited near-by towns: Haarlem, Utrecht, Gouda, and Leyden. We found that the true symbol of present-day Holland is not the windmill but the bicycle. In every town, on every road there were cyclists — a young man with his girl sitting side-saddle behind; a couple each on a bike and holding hands; a mother going shopping with her youngest child in a little seat on the handlebars, her next youngest in a little wicker chair at the back; a family going on a visit strung out one behind the other; a priest with his long black robe billowing around him; delivery boys carrying heavy baskets; children with bags of books. When at five in the evening all these groups coalesced in a homeward-bound stream it was like a school of fish swarming down the streets.

Then the weather turned cold and Henry became ill with the flu. Fear darkened my heart again. But the doctor was reassuring and Henry was soon well. He decided, however, to postpone the trip he had planned to Friesland until spring. We spent the evenings at home with the children, the four of us together in the warmest room, playing games and studying. Henry began to work on the book he planned to write on contemporary literature. He wrote an article for the Dutch magazine *Bezinning*.

He was interested in every aspect of life in the Netherlands. He subscribed to a Dutch newspaper and to several Dutch magazines. He never missed any function, official or informal, connected with the Free University because this gave him opportunity to meet new people and talk with them. He accepted an invitation to take charge of the English services which were held once a month in the Gereformeerde Kerk in Amstelveen which we attended.

He had always said that he wanted to preach a sermon someday. "This is my opportunity," he said when I protested that he was too busy. On Sunday, November 25, he conducted the services in the Pauluskerk. He spoke on "The Inescapable God."

That was the last speech he wrote, the last talk he gave. The next Sunday, suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, God took him out of this world. In an instant the life we had together, the rich, satisfying life, was extinguished, blotted out. I was alone. The children were fatherless. Our plans for Europe, our hopes for the future lay in ruins. This was the end of a dream; this was the end of a purposeful, dedicated life; this was the end — dust and ashes.

BUT WHEN I arrived home I knew that dust and ashes was not the end.

That is what the minister said in his funeral sermon. "What more wonderful thing could happen to a person than that which did happen to Henry Zylstra on a street corner in Europe on December 2, 1956? He was transported from earth into the very presence of the God he loved and served while here. I ask again — what greater blessing could have come to him than that which was bestowed, when God reached down and turned his faith to sight?"

For the first time I could look beyond the fallen body and the ashen lips. I could see him swept up into heaven like Elijah, taken as by a whirlwind into the presence of God. For a moment the gates of heaven stood open and I caught a glimpse of its glory.

Then the letters began to pour in, letters from all over the country, testifying to the influence he had had on people's lives. I had not realized how deep an impact he had made, nor how far his influence had gone. There were letters from friends and associates, from former students, from men he had met in the army, from ministers, from teachers, saying: "He has molded us, directed us, inspired us."

As I read the hundreds of letters I remembered a quotation from Lecomte du Noüy: "The destiny of man is not limited to his existence on earth. . . . He exists less by the actions performed during his life than by the wake he leaves behind him like a shooting star. . . ." I knew this was true.

But Henry, the man, was gone — irrevocably gone. My husband, the children's father, the person on whom we depended, the man whom we loved and who loved us was gone from this world. I had selfishly hoped to be the first to die. I felt I could not face life without him. And now he was gone: I was alone.

What could fill the bottomless void left by his going? How was it possible not to be overwhelmed by despair at this devastating loss? How could one avoid the pitfalls of bitterness or self-pity? Now the inevitable question rose: "Why? Why?" Why should a brilliant man, a gifted man who was greatly needed, who had the ability to do valuable work, be taken away so early in his life? "Why, O God, why?"

But God does not give the answer in this world. He says, "Only believe." He says, "All things work

together for good to them that love God. . . ." But how could this immeasurable loss be for my children's good?

"If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small." Yes, my strength was small. Faced with this supreme crisis I knew that my faith had been superficial and undisciplined. It is easy to think you trust in God when you have a measure of security in this world. We know in theory that there is no permanence or real security in this world. But we rely more than we know on human love, on earthly security, on an ordered pattern of life. Now the pattern was torn from top to bottom: love, companionship, security, everything was taken away. The pivot on which my life turned, my center of reference on earth was gone. I felt maimed, as if a part of me — the most essential part — had been cut away. I felt defenseless, lost, helpless.

There was no human help. Friends came to comfort and went home to their own lives. I was alone. I must turn to God or be swallowed up in bitterness and despair. I had to throw myself upon God's love, step out upon it as Peter stepped out upon the water: if my faith wavered I would sink in the black waters. For without God life is meaningless, "A tale told by an idiot, a sound and fury signifying nothing."

It is not easy to convert suffering into ineradicable faith. Too often we think of Christianity as a way of life that will give us comfort and security. But Christ does not promise us security or ease. He says, "If any man will follow me let him take up his cross." The cross is not a symbol to be sung about unthinkingly in church. It is a real cross, as heavy as the one beneath which Christ stumbled on the road to Calvary. Jesus' disciples endured great suffering and died the death of martyrs.

Jesus said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." That is a hard saying. He that loveth husband more than me is not worthy of me — this is the truth I must accept. I must learn to say as Hopkins said in his dark night,

> Yet the rebellious wills
> Of us we do bid God to bend to him even so.

True faith is the subordination, not only of self- but of all loyalties and allegiances to the love of God. Christianity means a complete surrender to the will of God. It means saying "yes" to God even when He takes away the thing you wanted most; when He takes away the person you loved more than yourself, and the life you cherished and thought He had blessed.

Only through surrender of everything and acceptance of God's will can peace be found. That was the lesson God wanted me to learn. The death of my husband was not a tragedy in itself. It would be a tragedy only if the experience turned me away from God instead of bringing me close to Him. For ultimately that is the purpose of all experience — to bring us unto God.

Henry knew this: had lived by this belief. "Flight from God is folly," he said in his last talk. "God is inevitable. We have only a choice of which, not whether. If we do not have the one true God then we have a false God, and the false one does not gratify . . . . God is our destiny, our proper end, our natural habitat, our element, our home." He had found the meaning and purpose of life in the service of God. He had found it and lived by it. Because of this his end was not the grave.

To turn from his belief would be to lose him completely. It would be losing not only him, but the only hope of comfort. It would be turning from the source of light to the pit of darkness.

That something was gone and gone forever could not be denied. Death involves a very real loss and it is evasive to ignore the fact. Death is the result of sin, and sin means suffering. Many people, genuinely religious people, speak about death as an absence, as a short separation until a future meeting. But death is more than an absence: it is the end of something precious. The eternal is not the same as the temporal. Death ends a relationship that is valuable. Death destroys the body, and the body with all its imperfections is precious. A grown man with a keen disciplined mind and a sensitive loving heart is a valuable thing and to minimize the loss is evasive.

Death is a catastrophe. It is the outstanding event of our existence. Death is the supreme test of our faith. We cannot be sure we love God until we have met death face to face and overcome despair. Death forces us to choose — we can evade God and sink into despair or meaningless activity, or we can accept His will courageously and believe, with a belief that has been tested and tried, in His love.

Sooner or later the demand comes to everyone — to give up his life. And by giving it up God has promised that we shall find it. We shall find not only our own life, but the life of the loved one who has gone. For Henry is not gone. His presence is always with me.

In his funeral sermon the minister said:

> It was just a year ago that I was translating from the Dutch language a little Christmas story. But I had trouble with the last line. I couldn't get it right. And so, as so many did when they needed some assistance, I went to Dr. Zylstra. He translated for me the line which afforded me so much trouble. I would like to give you the line he put right for me. . . . "And there I preached the glad tiding of one whose coming makes it

possible for the joy of Christmas to be real everywhere — even in the presence of the dead."

It is difficult to speak of joy when the heart aches with grief. The sense of loss is so overwhelming that at times I cry out:

Life is a ring that has lost its stone.
The brilliant ruby, the jewel, is gone.
Where the light glittered reflecting all sun
Is an empty socket. A grave. Light is done.

But even as I say the words I know that the grave is not the end. I know there is something beyond the grave. I know that light is not done. The light that shone over Bethlehem shines over the world today.

When the pain of missing him seems unbearable I repeat the prayer I heard him pray that last Sunday of his life on earth:

O God the Father, make thy love
manifest to us,
O God the Son, do thou conform us
to thy image,
O God the Holy Spirit, send us thy
comfort,
O Triune God, to thee be all the
glory.

The Angel of Jehovah

by Edward J. Masselink

THE APPEARANCES of the Angel of Jehovah were like way stations on the road to Bethlehem. This was already understood by the saints of the Old Testament. Malachi closes his prophecy by stating: "The Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple; even the Angel of the Covenant, whom ye desire, behold he cometh, said Jehovah of hosts." Micah foretold that Bethlehem should be the place of His birth, and exclaims, "Out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." The appearances of the Angel of Jehovah were clearly associated with the Messianic promise.

Such unusual events must certainly be of far-reaching importance. We who live in the full light of revelation, should be able to interpret them even better than they who first witnessed them. It is our purpose to explore this vein of prophetic revelation concerning the coming of the Messiah.

THE PERSON

The person of the Angel of Jehovah is somewhat shrouded with a veil of mystery. His appearances were certainly unusual in character, the like of which had never been seen before. Here was one whom the human mind could never fully understand, whom human thought could never fully grasp. He remains the nameless one, not only as one who doth not have a name, but as one who essentially cannot have a name. No name can fully describe His being.

This matter is twice brought to the foreground. At the Jabbok Jacob says, "Tell me, I pray thee, thy name." And he said, "Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?" Before the birth of Samson, the Angel of Jehovah appeared to Manoah and his wife. "And Manoah said to the Angel of Jehovah, What is thy name, that when thy words come to pass, we may do thee honor? And the Angel of Jehovah said unto him, Wherefore asketh thou after my name, seeing it is Wonderful?" He draws a veil of mystery about His person. The word *wonderful* here means the incomprehensible one, The Miracle.

He says that His name is "Wonderful." In later prophecy this name was given to the Messiah. Isaiah says, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." The connection could hardly escape our notice. The prophet here gives to the Messiah the identical name which the Angel of Jehovah had given to Himself.

As we compare the person of the Angel of Jehovah with the person of Christ, we discover a striking similarity. Christ is one with the Father, and yet He is personally distinct from the Father. He says, "I and the Father are one," and at the same time He addresses the Father as "Thou." Within the trinity, there is a unity of the godhead, and at the same time there is a distinction between the persons.

We find the same characteristic in every instance where the Angel of Jehovah appears. He is addressed as Jehovah, or else He speaks as Jehovah. At the same time He differentiates between Himself and Jehovah in the third person. In the appearances of the Angel of Jehovah we are clearly on trinitarian ground. Looking back from the vantage point of the New Testament, we can iden-

tify Him as the second person of the trinity, the Son of God.

The Appearances

There were twelve actual appearances of the Angel of Jehovah which are recorded in the Bible. In addition to this, there are many scattered references throughout the Old Testament. A brief summary of these appearances will indicate that the conclusion which we have stated is warranted.

The first appearances of the Angel of Jehovah were to Hagar: once before the birth of Ishmael (Genesis 16:7-13), and again when she fled with Ishmael as a lad (Genesis 21:17-19). In each instance He is identified with Jehovah, for we are told, "She called the name of Jehovah that spoke to her . . . . Thou art a God that seest." Yet the Angel of Jehovah speaks of Jehovah in the third person, "Because Jehovah hath heard thy affliction."

The Angel of Jehovah appeared to Abraham before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18). The chapter begins, "And Jehovah appeared unto him by the oaks of Mamre," but evidently he did not recognize the divine character of his guest until the interview was almost over, for in Hebrews we read that "some have entertained angels unawares."

Jacob, fleeing before the wrath of Esau, spent the night at Bethel. There he sees a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. "And behold, Jehovah stood above it and said, I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac." Jacob anointed the pillar and said, "Surely Jehovah was in this place, and I knew it not." (Genesis 28).

When Jacob was at the Jabbok, "there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." When the traveller departed He said, "Thou hast striven with God," and Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, the face of God (Genesis 32). In neither of these appearances to Jacob is the Angel of Jehovah mentioned by name. Hosea, however, identifies Him as such when he says, "Yea, he had power with the angel and prevailed; he wept and made supplication to him: he found him at Bethel and there he spake to him; even Jehovah, the God of hosts; Jehovah is his memorial name" (Hosea 12:4).

When Moses was on Mount Horeb, "the Angel of Jehovah appeared to him in a flame, out of the midst of the bush." Then we read that "God called unto him out of the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses" (Exodus 3).

The Angel of Jehovah met Balaam in the way as Balaam went forth to curse the people of Israel. The Angel comes with divine authority, for He says, "Only the word that I speak unto thee, that shalt thou speak." On the other hand, He is distinguished from Jehovah, for we read, "Then Jehovah opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the Angel of Jehovah, standing in the way" (Numbers 22).

The Angel of Jehovah appeared to Joshua, on the plain before Jericho, as "a man . . . with his sword drawn in his hand." Joshua recognizes Him as divine, for he "fell on his face to the ground and did worship and said, What saith my Lord unto his servant" (Joshua 5).

When the Angel of Jehovah came to Gideon, He approached him as a traveller, with a staff in His hand. Then we read, "And Jehovah looked upon him and said, Go in this thy might, and save Israel" (Judges 6).

As the Angel of Jehovah appeared to the mother of Samson she said, "A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the Angel of God, very terrible." When the Angel of Jehovah departed, Manoah said to his wife, "We shall surely die, for we have seen God" (Judges 12).

In the prophecy of Zechariah, the Angel of Jehovah appears twice in a vision. In the first chapter we see Him standing among the myrtle trees. In chapter three, when Satan accuses the high priest, the Angel of Jehovah appears as his advocate, who answers the accuser, and clothes Joshua the High priest with pure and rich apparel. He addresses Jehovah, and says, "O Jehovah of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem." On the other hand He speaks as Jehovah, for He says, "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: if thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge . . . I will give thee a place of access among these that stand by."

The pattern remains consistent throughout. In every appearance the Angel of Jehovah identifies Himself with Jehovah, and yet, at the same time, differentiates between Himself and Jehovah. This cannot be understood except against a trinitarian background. We cannot fail to see the agreement between the person of the Angel of Jehovah, and the person of Christ. Most assuredly, we are here on the road that leads to Bethlehem. The Angel of the Covenant, of whom Malachi declares that He should suddenly come to His temple, is none other than the Christ, whom Simeon took into his arms and said, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart, Lord, according to thy word, in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

Principles Maintained

Important events are always in danger of being misunderstood. In connection with the appearances of the Angel of Jehovah, three principles are carefully safeguarded.

The first is the principle of the spirituality of God. There is a deep-seated tendency to identify God with some visible representation. The idols which abound

n every heathen temple bear testimony to this. This tendency was also very marked in Israel.

To safeguard against this danger, the form in which the Angel of Jehovah appeared varied from time to time. Sometimes He appeared in human form, as in the appearance to Joshua at Jericho. Sometimes He appeared in symbol, as when He spoke to Moses out of the burning bush. Sometimes there was evidently no visible representation at all, as when He spoke to Abraham out of heaven, on Mount Moriah.

Calvin calls attention to the fact that the same precaution is taken with reference to the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus at His baptism, He appeared in the form of a dove. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit came with the symbols of wind and fire. "The Holy Spirit once appeared in the form of a dove; but as he presently disappeared again, who does not perceive that by this momentary symbol, the faithful are taught that they should believe the Spirit to be invisible? That, being content with his power and grace, they might make no external representation of him. The appearances of God in human form were preludes to his future manifestation in Christ. Therefore, the Jews were not permitted to make this a pretext for erecting a symbol of deity in the form of a man" (Institutes I, p. 99).

The second principle which is maintained is that the written, inspired Word of God is the primary medium for special revelation. In connection with the appearances of the Angel of Jehovah, care is taken that they should not be regarded as superseding or overshadowing the divine revelation through the written word of Scripture. The most frequent appearances of the Angel of Jehovah occurred in the early stages of revelation. As the revelation in Scripture became fuller, the appearances of the Angel of Jehovah decreased. After the time of the writing prophets, He does not appear at all. There is only one exception, in the prophecy of Zechariah, and there He appeared in a vision. God will not detract from the written Word as the primary medium of revelation.

A third principle, which is safeguarded, is the finality and sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. The appearances of the Angel of Jehovah were never associated with the altar, or with the thought of sacrifice. Gideon did bring a gift, but it was not a sin-offering; and it was brought *to* the Angel of Jehovah, not *by* Him. There is no record of the Angel of Jehovah bringing any kind of sacrifice. The Roman Catholic Church has introduced the error of the continued sacrifice of Christ in the Mass. God here deliberately safeguards against any thought of a preliminary sacrifice on the part of Christ before the incarnation.

The Encounter

The purpose of the appearances of the Angel of Jehovah was to prepare God's people for His coming by revealing Himself to them. The focus of light is always on His person. The revelation consisted not so much in what He said or did, but rather in the fact that He appeared, and in the circumstances under which He came.

We might have expected that, in His appearances, the Angel of Jehovah would have given momentous declarations of new, and hitherto unrevealed truth. We might have anticipated great and sudden advances in the content of divine revelation. At least, we could have assumed that He would have performed great and notable miracles.

All of this was, however, conspicuously absent in the appearances of the Angel of Jehovah. In what He said, nothing appreciably new was added to what had already been made known in the sphere of special revelation. Very little that He did was miraculous. He came not so much to reveal new aspects of truth, as to reveal Himself.

From this we may learn that the center of the Christian religion is a person, and that the heart of the Christian faith is a personal relation to this person. We must not only encounter the truth, but we must meet God Himself, and learn to know Him in the inner recesses of our heart.

The circumstances under which the Angel of Jehovah appeared to men are also significant. He made contact with them in the midst of real and actual life situations. He confronted men on the plane of their everyday work and struggle, and there He manifested Himself to them. Under the broiling heat of the desert sun, amid the loneliness of a mountain top, in the desperation of a midnight struggle, in the agonizing grief of the heart of a father whose son was about to be slain, in a commander's dilemma as he charts the strategy of a seemingly hopeless battle, there the Angel of Jehovah appeared.

This has something to say to us today. We thank God for the light of Scripture. We affirm the objectivity and finality of divine revelation. We believe in the Bible as the inspired and infallible Word of God. We recognize the necessity of formulating dogma and of understanding doctrine. We do not underestimate the relevancy and worth of our standards of truth. Without them our faith would be without content. We must be able to say what we believe, as well as whom we believe.

Objective truth, however, is not of full value to us until it has been applied to our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Faith must become personal before it can be saving. We must not only know of God, but we must have met Him. There must be a divine encounter in our soul.

Christ still frequently meets us in the crises of our life. Where a mother keeps her midnight vigil, bending anxiously over a sick bed; where a child sobs itself into a broken-hearted slumber; in the hospital room where the news is broken to someone that he will be a life-long invalid; in countless situations of turmoil and tension and tragedy, there will Christ most often make Himself known.

Someone has said that there are two ways in which we may view life: one is from the balcony, and the other is from the road. Our danger has been that we have too much been spectators of life from the comfortable seclusion of the balcony. Our theology has been, too much, the theology of the balcony. Our religious thinking is in danger of losing itself in balcony speculation.

Simon the Stylite lived for years on top of a pillar, sixty feet high. He hoped to find Christ there, remote from life, on his tower. Christ can be found far better on the dusty road beneath, amid the sweating, jostling, throbbing crowd. To teach us this was part of the purpose of these singular appearances.

The Perspective

There is a close resemblance between the appearances of Christ after His resurrection. Two men were travelling to Emmaus, and as they walked, Christ joined them and accompanied them on their journey, conversing with them as they went. At first they noticed nothing unusual about their companion. Only when they reached their home did they recognize Him, in the breaking of the bread. Then, suddenly, He vanished from their sight. How closely this parallels several appearances of the Angel of Jehovah in the Old Testament is immediately obvious.

In the nature of the case, there was at least one great difference. The Angel of Jehovah appeared only in human *form*. Christ, after His resurrection, appeared in a true, though glorified, human *nature*.

Aside from this, the similarity is more than a surface resemblance. In both cases, the contact was intermittent: He came and He went. It was only occasional and at intervals. It was an "appearance" rather than a sojourn. It was a "manifestation" rather than an abiding. In neither case was there the close familiarity which we see, for instance, between Christ and His disciples during His ministry, when they said, "Master, where dwellest thou?," and He answered, "Come and see." Both the Angel of Jehovah and Christ after His resurrection belonged to the heavenlies and were only visitants here below.

This places the appearances of the Angel of Jehovah in their proper perspective. We look in vain, in connection with the Angel of Jehovah, for anything directly prophetic of Christ's state of humiliation. We find there no intimation of His rejection and crucifixion, His suffering and death. When He appears there is no crown of thorns upon His brow, there are no ropes that bind His hands. About Him there is a suggestion of majesty and transcendent greatness. He comes with authority and rank.

The perspective lies beyond the state of humiliation, and looks forward to the state of exaltation. It looks forward to Olivet rather than to Golgotha. When we look at a mountain range from a distance we can see the peaks beyond; but we overlook the valley that lies between. So the appearances of the Angel of Jehovah overlook the valley of Christ's humiliation, and look beyond it to what Christ would be for His people as the result of it.

The Covenant

The Angel of Jehovah is called the Angel of the Covenant. This is more than just a convenient designation. It indicates His close relation to the covenant of grace.

The first appearance of the Angel of Jehovah coincided exactly with the establishment of the covenant of grace. Genesis 15 tells of the sacrifice which confirmed the covenant. Genesis 17 records the promise of the covenant. Genesis 16 gives the account of the first appearance of the Angel of Jehovah. It was as though He had delayed His coming until the covenant was established.

Every subsequent appearance of the Angel of Jehovah was made to those who stood within the circle of the covenant. The one exception is the appearance to Balaam, and there He comes to protect God's covenant people.

His name is the Angel of Jehovah. Only by way of exception is He called the Angel of God. Jehovah is God's covenant name. The very name of the Angel of Johovah is a reminder of God's covenant of grace.

He is called the Angel of the Covenant because in His appearance there is an initial fulfillment of God's covenant promise. The central promise of the covenant of grace is that God will dwell with His people. This promise made necessary the incarnation, with sacrifice and atonement. It required that the Word should become flesh and tabernacle among us. The ultimate fulfillment of that promise lies in heaven. There the temple has disappeared, and all of heaven has become the holy of holies. "And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people."

Of the fulfillment of that promise, we have a foretaste in the appearances of the Angel of Jehovah. It is rather significant that He never appeared in the temple. Wherever He came, he brought the

temple with Him. To both Moses and Joshua He says, "Put off thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy." The crest of Horeb, the plain of Jericho, have become a holy of holies. This foreshadows the coming of Him who could say: "One greater than the temple is here." For the moment, God descended and dwelt among His people.

The Angel of Jehovah brought the promise of God's convenant of grace into fulfillment by foreshadowing the threefold office of the Mediator: prophet, priest and king.

The office of the prophet is to speak for God to men. This finds its highest attainment when God speaks directly to men. This was fulfilled in Christ: "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us in his Son." This is prefigured in the Angel of Jehovah. God comes to man, not through a messenger whom He sends; He comes in direct, immediate self-communication.

The office of the priest is to lead men to God. The prophet makes men hear God's voice. The priest lets men see God's face. Christ is our great High Priest, and one day He will take us with Him into the heavenly sanctuary, into the immediate presence of God Himself. Also this we find in the Angel of Jehovah. Isaiah calls Him the Angel of God's face. God says that His name is in Him. Manoah said, "We have seen God face to face, and our life has been preserved."

The office of king is to guide and direct, to rule and protect. Christ is our eternal king. Heavenly hosts are under His command. Even in the depth of His humiliation, He could say, "Or thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels?" "Behold, I have given him . . . a leader and commander to the peoples," says the prophet. This, too, was foreseen in the Angel of Jehovah. When Israel encamped before Jericho, they were facing a mighty foe. Joshua probably thought that he was the captain of Jehovah's hosts. Suddenly he sees a man standing, with a drawn sword in His hand. The Angel of Jehovah has come to the camp to assume supreme command: "As the prince of Jehovah's host am I now come." He is the captain of the armies of Israel.

Fulfilling the functions of prophet, priest and king, the Angel of Jehovah brought God's covenant promise into initial fulfillment. This foreshadowed the coming of Him who is our chief prophet, only high priest, and eternal king.

Glimpses of the Savior

The appearances of the Angel of Jehovah were set against the background of the actual life experiences of the people to whom He came. They revealed not only that the Messiah would appear, but they indicated also who it was that should come. In each instance, some distinct facet of divine perfection came to the foreground. In them we recognize clear-cut pen portraits of the Savior.

The first appearance was to Hagar in the wilderness of Shur. Here stands revealed the tenderness of our Lord. Hagar was a woman of many wrongs. Of Egyptian origin, she had learned faith in Abraham's tent. Now, frenzied with trouble, she had fled, and was retracing her steps through the desert, back to Egypt. In the bitterness of her soul she evidently could not even pray any more. The Angel of Jehovah appeared to her and said to her: "Jehovah hath heard thy affliction." That was a gracious word, and with it came a gracious promise that God would make her a great nation. When she fled a second time, He appeared to her again, and repeated the promise. The first appearance of the Angel of Jehovah was not to Abraham in his tent, but to Hagar in the wilderness. Who is this but the compassionate Savior who after His resurrection appeared first to Mary Magdalene? The identity is unmistakable.

To Abraham on Mount Moriah the Angel of Jehovah revealed that God Himself would provide the substitute, and that Isaac should be spared. When the day of fulfillment came, He Himself became the substitute and, like Isaac, carried the wood up the neighboring mount of Calvary. When He reached the summit, He was not spared, because there was no substitute for Him. "He that spared not his own son," says Paul. Here stands revealed His redeeming grace.

Jacob, at Bethel, saw the heavens opened and a ladder that reached up into it, with the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. Jehovah stood above it, and the stone became its memorial. This looks forward to Him in whom heaven and earth were re-united again, and who said to Nathanael: "Henceforth ye shall see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

At the Jabbok He appears as the one who is the answer to prayer, as well as the one who answers prayer. To Balaam He came as the one who warns the disobedient and takes issue with them, in the end overruling their evil devices for the blessing of His people. At the burning bush He reveals Himself as the one who hears His peoples' cry, and brings them forth with a mighty hand. To Gideon, in the forest clearing, He comes as the one who concerns Himself with the problems of the threshingfloor, and knows the need of men for bread. To Manoah and his wife He appears when they are laboring in the field, and gives them direction for the training of their child. To Joshua He came as

the captain of Jehovah's host, and the leader of the armies of Israel. At last, In Zechariah's vision, He becomes the advocate for one who cannot plead his own cause; who takes away the tarnished garment and clothes with raiment pure and white.

This is none other than the Christ who was to come. Nowhere, in all of prophecy, do we find such a clear etching of the character of our Savior. As Calvin says, the appearances of the Angel of Jehovah were a prelude to the incarnation. The road from Hagar's fountain leads to the manger cradle of Bethlehem.

Writing the Christian Novel

by John Timmerman

THE CHRISTIAN POET, dramatist, and novelist need public support. Possibly the poet can create for long years with very little of it: Whitman and Frost are examples of long, lonely creation. But the dramatist needs the attendant public to make his art live, and so, I think, does the novelist. Therefore in discussing the fostering of creative art among us, I shall consider the novel, the one genre that has some chance of reaching our public. I shall tell you what I hope for in a Christian novel, its genesis and reception. That I who cannot write novels do so is but another example of occupational effrontery.

THE novel, would, of course, be a work of art; its Christian significance would in no sense atone for shoddy craftsmanship. In art one can neither cheat nor fake and no Christian writer would want to. A Christian novel would therefore be a fictional example of significant verbal form whose angle of vision is Christian. All art is selective. Every novelist chooses his detail from a philosophical point of view however crude or naive that may be. The body of life, the contained experience in this novel would be patterned by Christian vision, and it would be the integrating spirit of the latter that would make it Christian.

There can certainly be no Calvinistic literary technique. There are no sectarian lines, colors, or tones. John Calvin had a style, but Calvinism cannot have. The sonnet, blank verse, rime royal, Spenserian stanza are contentless forms. Realism, stream-of-consciousness writing, even surrealism as techniques are neutral. Neither is there a Calvinistic subject matter. What could it be? A man reading the Bible? The life of a Calvinist? A study of Calvin's ideas? The history of Calvin College? If there is to be a Calvinistic novel it will have to express itself neither in form specifically nor in subject matter specifically but in tone, spirit, vision, total impact.

Let me illustrate. *Tess of the D'urbervilles* is one of Hardy's greatest novels. When one finishes the sad life of Tess one is moved to agree with the author that the "President of the Immortals" had finished his sport with Tess; when one finishes *Jude the Obscure* one oppressively feels the weight of the Hardyean world, a world of capricious, irrational force, a world of Hap, in which one can well ask with Hardy:

> Has some vast imbecility
> Mighty to build and bend
> But impotent to tend
> Framed us in jest but
> Left us now to hazardy?

When one finishes a typical Dreiser novel life seems a stinking game. In the earlier Hemingway novels the struggles of man seem about as important as the "struggle of ants on the burning log of a campfire." Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* concretely presents a world of passivity, a world in which the entire action and personal reaction are moved from the outside. In all these authors there is no mistaking the vision. In that sense one can certainly have a Christian novel, if not a Calvinistic one. A Christian novel would leave the reader with the full conviction that events have moved in God's world, a world where God's providence is naturally and organically operative. The world and vision of Dante, of Chaucer, of Milton, of Bunyan, of Greene, of Paton have this Christian spirit.

I do not pretend that such a novel will bridge the cultural and religious gap between the Christian and non-Christian. A novelist is neither an apologist nor an evangelist. His first duty as novelist is to form his experience as freshly and movingly as possible. As novelist he has no mandate to demolish existentialists or manhandle naturalists. It is his duty to give an authentic vision. But my hope is, of course, that this novel will be so soundly rooted in reality, so richly regional that it will not be provincial. It may well deal with Americans of Dutch descent, but they will be human; if you

prick them they will bleed, if you oppress them they will rebel, if you beat them in business you are very smart. Furthermore their religion is no obscure hole-in-the-corner aberration; their spiritual life is in the main line of Protestantism. They emphasize man's guilt, severance, and woe — watchwords of modernity. If the people and their lives are presented with brilliance, if the novel is a conspicuous esthetic triumph it will be studied by intelligent men of alien vision; it will work its way into critical appraisal as significant art and may be used by God as a transcendent tract.

AN IMPORTANT question concerns the nurture and support of letters and men of creative genius if such should appear.

For genius one must, of course, wait. Genius is notoriously whimsical in its appearance. Since, however, it has come in the person of Burns to a Scotch hut, in the person of Keats to a London stableman's home, in the person of Twain to a Missouri store, and in the person of Henry Adams to a Massachusetts mansion, there is nothing incredible about its possible appearance in Clara City, Minnesota, or Lodi, New Jersey. Prospective men of letters will doubtless appear. How can we stimulate the maximum fruition of whatever talent God gives our little group?

We must give our writers roots, a sense of belonging, an anchorage. They must possess the world of nature and man as well as judge it. The artist works through concrete detail, and the biography of literary genius convincingly evidences the necessity of a rooted childhood and adolescence and an appreciation of the senses. He must feel one with his family and group; he should not have as Crane to "shoulder the curse of sundered parentage." He should have a father on earth and in heaven. He will then have the security that permits rewarding judgment rather than a wail of despair. A writer brought up feeling that he belongs in this world because he belongs to God to whom the world belongs will have proper groundwork for proper vision.

One of the reasons why Puritanism has been so sterile in a literary sense is precisely that the Puritan felt so uneasy about the world of the senses. One feels the fear, the distrust of the overwhelming beauty in leaf and landscape, in the panorama of clouds, in the haunting witchery of spring. Puritanism often felt nature as an enchanter. Therefore Puritan poetry is generally thin, spare, and bloodless. One must go to the Anglicans and the Catholics for poetry, because they saw nature as redeemed, the sensuous experience as legitimate, and when realized in art a form of worship. One must feel this to be God's world if one is to write like Hopkins:

> Glory be to God for dappled things —
> For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;
> For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
> Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
> Landscape plotted and pieced-fold, fallow, and plough;
> And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.
> All things counter, original, spare, strange;
> Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
> With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
> He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
> Praise Him.

AS THE WRITER matures he needs a congenial atmosphere in which to flourish. Such an atmosphere grows out of a realization that art is not a product of formulas. Even a classicist like Pope realized that a good poem "needs to snatch a grace beyond the reach of art." A Christian novel will not aim at a series of *do's and don'ts*; it does not cramp the experience and observation of the Christian consciousness within a set of external imperatives, neither does it channelize vivid experience into a mechanical and obvious thesis. Rather it gives us the honest vision of a sensitive Christian soul, and it gives that with the restraint and delicacy characteristic of the Christian mind and heart. We have to let the Christian artist find his own form and express his own experience in his own way. As Keats has said:

> The genius of Poetry must work out its own salvation in a man. It cannot be matured by law and precept, but by sensation and watchfulness of itself. That which is creative must create itself.

We must give our writers artistic freedom because literature cannot be written to order. What the artist expresses is his own vision of reality, his individual insight, his difference. That cannot be dictated. In the case of the Christian that difference will be rooted in Christian belief. It will come naturally, intuitively. Reason and intelligence will give it structure and form.

But as with all freedom, there are limits for decent men. Complete artistic freedom, freedom to say anything you please any way you please is surely a vicious thing. Both art and morality impose restraints. Certainly a Christian writer will dike some of his own stream of consciousness. What are just limits for the Christian? It seems to me that the famous phrases attributed to Saint Augustine have point here. They run like this: In the necessary things unity, in the doubtful things liberty, in all things charity. The Christian writer must respect Christian dogma and morality; he must be allowed freedom in form and taste; and he should always exercise charity.

THE CHRISTIAN NOVEL we hope for may come as a sharp blow on the cheek. An uncritical vision is no vision at all. We all admit we have made but a feeble beginning of sainthood; if a writer is to portray us he will show us as sinners with touches of nobility through grace. Our growing materialism, our lack of interest in the free play of ideas, our straining at the gnat of an unpleasant word in a novel while we swallow the camel of bathing beach attire, our preoccupation with ecclesiastical trivia — all are fair game for the novelist. Don't be angry if he asks you to pay for the satire.

Since it is a writer's business to sharpen experience through the deft and illuminating word, we must allow a good deal of formal experimentation and we must be prepared to earn our enjoyment of his work. We cannot loll on our sofa while appreciating a fresh talent.

Our men of letters should also be encouraged. They should be instrumental in introducing a lively flow of ideas into circulation. Our intellectuals should create an atmosphere of living opinion and discussion. Philosophers, scientists, literary critics, theologians should all be making ideas available to the creative artist and to us. Our educated men and women should feel free to investigate, criticize and report. They should make tradition contemporary and the contemporary relevant to tradition.

WE HAVE pens of one sort or another; their efforts may, if they are lucky, bring in a few pennies. I doubt, however, whether our group has produced a writer loyal to it whose literary earnings provide more than a pleasant bonus. Suppose you wish to be a creative writer today. What are your prospects? You cannot arrange to be born to wealthy and sympathetic parents, but you might find it convenient to marry a patron. You can make a living in industry as Wallace Stevens did, or in medicine as Wm. Carlos Williams does and write with your excess energy. You can attempt to combine creative writing with college teaching as so many critics, novelists, and poets do today. You could run the hazard of trying to write salable pulp until you have money enough to write for art. But there are not many John P. Marquands. It remains true in art as elsewhere that "the victor belongs to the spoils." Or you can live a long time on Poverty Lane like Faulkner and Sherwood Anderson or always like Fred Feikema.

Almost all these ways exact a high price. The rich wife isn't easily got and when got may not be easily managed; a divided career easily results in meagre output. Poverty Lane is hard.

Now, I can feel for the person who says: "Let the writer take his chances — like the inventor. Struggle won't hurt him, and if his products d not sell, that is his tragedy. Society does not ow the artist a living." I can feel for that attitude, bu I do not share it. I believe art is of such incalculabl worth to a culture that if a genuine artist cannc support himself through his genius the public shoul aid him. I find the death, largely from poverty an neglect, of poets like Poe, Lindsay, and Hart Crane tragic; I find diminished creativity becaus of absorption in other tasks and wariness becaus of academic associations most unfortunate. For tunately many Americans share this point of viev because there are many grants, scholarships, awards and prizes available today. Furthermore, som publishers have become much more adventurous anc generous. However, these are really stopgaps. Th writer eventually runs out of graduate-assistant ships, Hudson Review Fellowships in Fiction, Ful bright amd Ford fellowships. Finally, his books have to *sell.*

What can we do in our own circles? Patronage in the old sense is an anachronism today. It was a vital option in the days of chivalry when the poet had a wholly respectable place in a noble household. He was a court bard and proud of it; he accepted his pension and his cask of wine without servility. Today private patronage is both humiliating and impossible. Our support will have to be more objective. Promising chemists and musicians attain scholarships at Calvin. Promising seminarians are given a fellowship to the Free University. Why not emulate this in creative writing? The Eerdmans Publishing Company has for years given generous support to student writing. Others might go and do likewise. But one must be realistic, and these can only be temporary aids; in the last analysis, the best way to help a writer is to buy his book and to help sell it.

I WISH to conclude by defining the role of the man of letters in our Reformed community. I trust that epithet does not sound too pretentious; I am fully aware that we do not harbor a Matthew Arnold, a T. S. Eliot, or a Douglas Bush. When I speak of the man of letters I refer to a man who is habitually and professionally concerned with reading and interpreting great literature and who from time to time evaluates his experiences in rewarding writing. I believe a person has a vital role to play in our group and that it differs sharply from the role of the typical university scholar.

I do not mean, therefore, a primary devotion to investigative research, the publication of articles for learned, specialized journals on the sources of Chaucer's astronomical references, or such an article as Edward Hungerford's scintillating account in *American Literature* of "Walt Whitman

nd his Chart of Bumps." There are more than nough talented scholars to deal with those matters. refer rather to a thoughtful, Reformed appraisal f literature.

Such appraisal should be esthetically competent, ut it should go beyond formalistic criticism with ts preoccupation with function rather than value. It should judge the moral, philosophical, and religious values of creative art. It should understand and interpret the cultural agony of our time. The great writers have always been moralists in the sense that moral judgment is implied within the contained experience of the work of art. Shakespear's world is a world of judgment as well as sympathy. It is full of error, sin, ruin, and incalculable waste rising from the characters of men; it is also a world of humanity, understanding and above all mercy. Even Faulkner's world in his own words "measures greatness by the distance between the dream and the failure." He too tried, in his own words "to catch the answer to the whole riddle." Consequently, the final value of a literary experience is determined not alone by esthetic but also by religious criteria. In great literature meaning and form are commensurate, the truest vision in the most adequate form is the greatest writing. It is our business to integrate our faith and our literary experience into sound criticism. That is difficult indeed. To do it we will need more talent, more time, more energy, and additional media.

Our Calvin alumni have during our brief independent existence as a college produced an unusual amount of good writing. Five of our alumni have reached national literary prominence. We may dislike some of their work as undistinctive, but that it shows talent of a high order is indisputable. Can the University of Michigan alumni equal it during the last thirty years? We have had, have, and will have gift; it is our business to promote its full fruition.

Lammert Jan Hulst

by J. G. Vanden Bosch

HAD YOU met him, the Reverend Lammert Jan Hulst, pastor of the Coldbrook Christian Reformed Church, deftly swinging his cane as he was on his way to the homes of his parishioners, you would have seen a striking figure. There was something patriarchal in his appearance as well as ministerial. With his manly face, his white hair and flowing gray beard, seen against a background of black apparel, he made an unforgettable impression upon you. Had you seen him in his pulpit and heard his address, in clear and resonant voice and in a forthright and natural manner, an audience that filled every nook and corner of a large church, you would very likely have called him a pulpiteer of unique power. And what made him still more an interesting figure was the fact that he became almost a centenarian. Had he lived only two and a half years longer, he would have been a hundred years old, thanks to his abstemious way of living. He ate and drank moderately and clung to simple habits of life with uncompromising regularity.

Lammert Jan Hulst was born February 10, 1825, at Dalfsen in the province of Overisel, Holland. His parents were farmers, neither rich nor poor, and belonged to a group of three families that, dissatisfied with the corruptness of the state church, met in their homes to worship God and to get nourishment for their inner life. Such groups are called conventicles in church history. Being only nine years old when the Secession broke out in 1834, the boy was a witness of the origin and the growth of this movement. Since he was part of it and his life ran parallel to it, Rev. Hulst may in many respects be regarded as a symbol or personification of the Secession, though not in all. Not only the church, but also the school at Dalfsen was in a state of religious decline, the policy of neutrality having made it so, so that the parents at the early age of ten removed him from school. Lammert was a serious boy, and, sensitive to religious impressions, was very much concerned about his salvation, and agonized in prayer for the assurance of being a child of God.

From his sixteenth to his twentieth year, young Hulst was a shepherd often entrusted with the care of two hundred sheep. During this period he fell in with frivolous young men whose companionship wrought havoc with his spiritual life, so much so that he ceased to pray. Finally realizing that a shepherd's trade was not desirable as a life work and that spiritually he had sunk to a deplorable state, he abandoned it and found employment with a Christian farmer, in whose home he soon experienced a revival of his life of faith, once so earnest.

A year or so later when a student from the school at Hoogeveen was preaching in his parental home there sprang up in him an irresistible desire to become a minister of the gospel. Especially through the generosity of an older brother the way for the fulfillment of this longing was opened. He enrolled as a student in the school at Hoogeveen conducted by Rev. W. A. Kok, whom he regarded till the end of his days as a masterful teacher. Since he was young, only twenty-two years old, he was at the outset confronted with the problem whether or not he should study languages. Circumstances led him to take the shortest cut to his goal. In the churches of the Secession there was so great a dearth of ministers that he was advised to omit languages, and he heeded this advice. Viewed in the light of his remarkable career in the church, this decision can be justified, but the meager course accounts in part for some of the things that hampered his insight and narrowed his cultural horizon.

The second circumstance that determined his choice was the desire of a brother, younger by two years, also to become a messenger of the gospel of peace. This brother, Fredrikus, was ordained in 1855 and, having served five churches in his native land, accepted a call in 1868 from the Central Avenue Church, Holland, Michigan. From 1871 to 1873 he served the First Church of Chicago, Illinois, where a brief illness ended his life. These data will perhaps mean more to some readers if they are told that the Reverend Fredrikus Hulst was the father of J. B. Hulst who because of ill health was compelled to discontinue his studies for the ministry, then conducted a book store for several years, and finally became a much loved exhorter in our churches. Rev. J. B. Hulst of Ireton, Iowa, is a great grandson.

HAVING studied only two years and being only twenty-four years old, Hulst was in 1849 ordained at Birdaurd, Friesland, where he labored five and one-half years. Should one think that the young minister, having reached his goal, was satisfied with his achievement, he is greatly mistaken. There was in him something of the rage of noble discontent that made him reach out after higher and better things. The making of sermons is a great art and one difficult to master. Many a young minister fresh from the seminary experiences the woes of evolving a method of sermonizing that satisfies his artistic and spiritual conscience. Young Rev. Hulst also experienced this. When he had labored in his first charge only a few months, with heroic candor he confronted himself with the question whether his preaching had been of the right kind. He came to the conclusion that it had not been. He had made too much of the marks of being a Christian, had made Christ in the believer rather than Christ for the believer the burden of his message, had stressed the Christian more than the Christ. The result was that he began to loathe his own sermons and to experience the agonies of what he called "preek koorts," sermonizing fever which lasted for two years and became so serious that he suffered physically. The young minister, so handsome that everybody admired him, turned pale and wan and was suspected by his parishioners of having tuberculosis. Seeing his error, he decided at once to eliminate the mystic strain from his sermons and to follow the method of Christ and the apostles, which in his opinion, called for explaining the meaning of the text; only this and nothing more. From one extreme he swung to another, forgetting that the practical application of the truth and the stimulation of that which is deepest and innermost in a believer's soul as well as the mere interpretation of Scripture have a place in a good sermon.

Rev. Hulst's "preek koorts" and the change in his style of preaching, however, led to one good result: it made him aware of the deficiencies of his limited training. No longer satisfied with sermons filled with emotional commonplaces, he felt the need of probing the meaning of a text, but was unable to do so. He saw the necessity of studying languages. Fortunately he had an educated deacon in his consistory who consented to be his private tutor in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, to each of which he devoted a year of study. Another taught him arithmetic which had never been taught him at school. He came to realize that the pursuit of cultural subjects broadens a man's intellectual horizon and disciplines his mental powers. Later when he was in his second charge at Ferwerd, Friesland, he had the courage to undertake the task of tutoring three young men who had ministerial aspirations, teaching them the Dutch language and Dutch history, Latin and Greek, psychology and logic, general history and Christian doctrine. He owned that he could not chase others if he did not run himself. One of these young men was D. K. Wielenga, later professor of church history at Kampen.

Some ten years after his ordination Rev. Hulst underwent another significant change, this time in respect to the doctrine of the covenant. As a young minister he had in his theological thinking taken the eternal decrees of God as his point of departure. But as he did so, he ran into difficulties, not being able to harmonize these decrees with their execution in time. If he allowed these eternal decrees to control his thinking, he felt that in his preaching he had no message except for the elect; could admit to the Lord's table only the elect; could in his pastoral labors confort none but the elect; and could not administer discipline except to the non-elect. From this situation, which presented itself

to his mind as an impasse, he, after much praying and pondering, found escape in adopting the covenant of grace established in time with Abraham as his starting point. Henceforth this new view controlled all his thinking, whether theoretical or practical. He still could not bring together harmoniously the divine decrees and the covenant as history, but he found satisfaction in the words of Moses. "The secret things belong to the Lord, our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever" (Deut. 29:29). He now believed in three kinds of grace — common, covenant, and saving, in the second of which he had nothing to do with God's eternal decrees. Thus he had abandoned what he called a purely speculative principle for a Biblical and workable one.

REV. HULST had been pastor of the large congregation at Stadskanaal, Groningen, ten years when he received a call from the Reformed Church at Danforth, Illinois. Thus in answer to prayer the way was opened for this American-minded Dutch minister to migrate to these states. He accepted the call and in 1874 began his labors in the small rural church at Danforth. Two years later he was invited by the newly organized Coldbrook Church at Grand Rapids, Michigan. Seeing much greater opportunities for service in this church, he responded favorably, took up his duties in it, and remained thirty years.

In America, Coldbrook Church was the scene where Rev. Hulst's most significant work was done. It was a rapidly growing church. The influx of immigrants was so strong that the congregation, numbering only thirty-six families when he came, at one time reached the three-hundred mark. What is more significant, when in the beginning of the 1880 decade the Masonic agitation disturbed the peace of the mid-western Reformed churches, Rev. Hulst was the acknowledged leader of the anti-Masonic forces. He took the position that membership in the lodge was incompatible with membership in the Christian church. This anti-Masonic movement had its origin in Holland, Michigan, where an ex-member of the Masons exposed secrets of the order. Upon learning of the horrors perpetrated in the lodge churches were shocked, indignation meetings were held, and memorials were sent to General Synod pleading for the exclusion of Masons from church membership. Synod refused to comply and Coldbrook Church, with the exception of fifteen members, severed connection with the Reformed Church of America and in 1883 joined the Christian Reformed fellowship. Entire congregations in Grand Haven, Zeeland, Holland, Muskegon, Fremont, and Drenthe, and individual members in other places, followed suit. A dozen or more years before, Rev. Hulst had been unwilling to entertain a call from a Christian Reformed Church in America, so he had replied to the solicitations of his brother Fredrikus; now he was a leader in a new secession.

In the Coldbrook Church there were those who in the course of time Americanized more rapidly than others and favored the introduction of services in the English language or the organization of an entirely new congregation. But in Rev. Hulst they found no ally; rather a determined opponent. Evidently he did not understand how through the influence of environment the attitude of some of his parishioners to America and its official language began to differ from his. He had supported Rev. J. H. Vos in that brother's hostility to the organization of Lagrave Avenue, and now he was just as consistently hostile to the launching of Broadway Church, most of whose charter members came from his congregation. Those who wished to worship God in the language of America, he was sure, were beginning to be indifferent to the Reformed faith, a conviction which happily history has proved to be wrong.

The time came when the venerable Rev. Hulst had shepherded the Coldbrook flock for thirty years. Though he had reached the high old age of eighty-one years, his natural strength had seemingly not abated. He continued carrying on as he did when he came, preaching three times on Sunday and attending to his pastoral duties. The suggestion of his consistory, well meant, that he retire fell on deaf ears; instead, when the call from the small rural church at Eastmanville came, he accepted it. Here he lived amid natural scenery of great beauty — of which he never made mention — and could do his work with ease and enjoy a well earned leisure, if he so chose. The relief that Eastmanville gave him, however, lasted only four years. Arthritis compelled him to ask for his emeritation. In spite of his age he completely recovered from this affliction, and again preached, occasionally even three times a Sunday. He kept up his contributions to *De Wachter,* but eventually failing health forced him to relinquish also this task. The summons to come home finally came when he was in his ninety-eighth year, being full of days, as Scripture has it.

REV. HULST was married April 25, 1850, to Abeltje H. Hellenga. Their home was blessed with seven children, three sons and four daughters. One of the sons was Dr. Henry Hulst, a physician not only locally but nationally known for contributions to the science of X-rays as applied to the medical art, and a man with a strong philosophical bent. John, another son, was a graduate of the school of engineering at Ann Arbor and eventually became vice-president of the United States Steel Corporation. At his death, which occurred only within recent years, it was found

that he had bequeathed a considerable sum of money — he was a millionaire — to the Eastmanville Church, his father's last charge. Mrs. Hulst died May 3, 1907, and thus was ended a union of fifty-seven years. Funeral services for both Rev. Hulst and Mrs. Hulst were held in the Coldbrook Church.

IN THE FIELD of authorship Rev. Hulst was not a stranger. Numerous were the articles he contributed to *De Wachter,* chiefly of a dogmatic or apologetic nature. First to mention among his publications is *Supra en Infra,* published by Dornink in 1891. In 1906 there appeared from his pen a practical commentary of the book of *Revelation.* In 1913, *Drie-en-Zestig Jaren Prediker* (*Sixty-three Years a Preacher*), came from the press, a most interesting autobiography reluctantly written at the urgent request of friends, from which most of the material for this life story has been gleaned. Very likely he wrote it with pens made by himself from quills.

Then there is *Oud en Nieuw Calvinisme* (*Old and New Calvinism*), written in collaboration with his friend, Professor G. K. Hemkes, in which the authors criticized some of the characteristic teachings of Dr. A. Kuyper and defended the doctrines that always had currency in Secession circles. Among the specific Kuyperian tenets attacked were those dealing with regeneration, justification, the covenant of grace, supra-lapsarianism, and the church. Without denying common grace they objected to the systematic application of the principle to the various areas of human activities outside the church. They were sure that the emphasis common grace received in Kuyper's comprehensive treatment would result in minimizing the importance of saving grace. That culture or civilization, apart from the Church, had any meaning of its own in the plan of God did not seem to occur to them. So unyielding an opponent of Kuyperian teaching was Rev. Hulst that when Dr. Vos gave his students the supra version of predestination he lodged a protest against the introduction of supralapsarianism and its implications. The difference between the theological thinking of men like Dr. Kuyper and Dr. Vos and that of Rev. Hulst should not occasion too much surprise: the former had been beneficiaries of a solid university education, the best to be had, and their approach was likely to be theoretical; the latter sat at the feet of a minister who was virtually self-made, and his approach was practical rather than theoretical. Besides, Rev. Hulst had the confessional writings of the Church with him. But whatever one may think of his doctrinal position, one cannot but marvel that he became the doughty theologian and the valiant defender of his views that he was.

As we have seen, Rev. Hulst became keenly aware of his limitations and by private study tried to overcome them. What helped him in these efforts was not only his clear mind, but his strong will as well. He knew what he willed and he willed what he knew. With unflagging zeal he applied himself to his self-imposed studies. When he was a young minister in his second charge, in order that he might not ignore any aspect of Reformed truth he began to compose his own dogmatics and wrote a thousand pages without finishing the task. Later in his third charge at Stadskanaal he set himself to the same task, but this time on a smaller scale and finished it. His determination to change his style of sermonizing is another case in point. There was in him a mystic strain which was nourished by the atmosphere of mysticism in which he grew up that remained with him throughout life. He enjoyed the visits of a nephew on Sunday evening and the conversations about the new life in the soul. He complained if parishioners did not sometimes of their own accord speak of the preciousness of their Savior. And he closes his autobiography with a touching personal testimony. And yet he did not allow the warmth of his suppressed mysticism to make his sermons glow, though it must have taken will power to persist in his chosen course. He knew that families living near his church disliked the cool objective character of his preaching and joined other churches, and yet he persisted.

Perhaps to make the characterization more nearly complete we should add that there was also a touch of the stoic in the man, contradictory though this may seem. One summer evening as he was presiding at a meeting of his consistory there was brought to him the very sad news of the drowning of his son Martin, twelve years old, in the Grand River. Rev. Hulst proposed to finish business, but the members of the consistory felt that the presence of death in the pastor's home called for immediate adjournment. One should not infer from this, however, that Rev. Hulst was cold and inaccessible. He was friendly, easily accessible, and not devoid of sociable qualities.

AN ACTIVE ministry of sixty-one years, that was the glory of Rev. L. J. Hulst. God had endowed him with rare gifts and blessed his use of them richly. His achievements were outstanding. To preach three sermons every Sunday for thirty years as he did at Coldbrook is not the accomplishment of a man of mediocre ability. Add to this the pastoral work always so abundant and urgent, in which work he was faithful and displayed rare tactfulness. Undoubtedly, his experience as a shepherd taught him many a lesson. As a shepherd knows the nature of sheep, so a good pastor knows the nature of men, its foolishness, its wayward-

ess, and its perversity. Rev. Hulst had such nowledge and made wise use of it. It made him atient and tactful in dealing with the shortcomngs and the errings of church members. It is interesting to note that, much as he valued admonion, he became increasingly distrustful, as he rew older, of the efficacy of formal discipline beause altogether too often unworthy motives viiated the process. At the end of his long pastorate t Coldbrook Church Rev. Hulst had his delinuents, a long list of them, whom he was loathe to rase as long as he could visit them and press upon hem the claims of the gospel. However, before eaving he saw to it that their names were removed rom the rolls. He had been oh so patient with hem, but evidently he did not have much faith in esults if further labor were expended upon them.

Such in main outlines is the life story of a farmer's son who by the grace of God rose to a position of eminence in the Church of Jesus Christ. Richly endowed with a passion for both the knowledge of God and the service of God, Rev. Hulst labored faithfully and abundantly, and he did so for more than sixty years. With such a record to his credit one might be inclined to conclude that he had advanced so far in the way of sanctification that he was one of the saintliest among the saints. The personal testimony at the close of his autobiography, however, disowns any such estimate of his spiritual life. Though sure of his salvation, he lamented his ability to overcome the corruptness of his nature which, he felt, became worse with advancing years. He owned that he did not live his new life on the lofty heights of the joy of the Lord, rather served "with his mind the law of God, but with his flesh the law of sin." He described himself as one whose faith is weak. And he ended his personal testimony by declaring that he built his hope on nothing less than on the redeeming love of the Savior.

BOOK REVIEW

SON OF TEARS. A novel of the life of Saint Augustine, *by Henry Coray.* New York: Putnam, 1957. $3.95

Reviewed by GEORGE HARPER, Instructor in English, Calvin College.

It has often been observed that it is easier to read about Christian saints than it is to live with them. Presumably few of us are in a position to dispute this judgment. But fewer still would care to dispute the proposition that to write about saints is the hardest job of all, at least the hardest job to do right. For saints present most intractable materials to the biographer: if their lives are not always hid in God, they are seldom open to many men. It is, perhaps, a truism that the saintly part of a saint's life is precisely the part that cannot be described in words. The residue of sainthood is frequently only a dry, gray ash — and what can be said about ash, after all.

Saint Augustine's life has perhaps more of biographical interest in it than have the lives of most saints; he left us his *Confessions*, and they are throughout tangential to his life itself. The temptation to the imaginative writer would be, probably, to take the biographical shards of the *Confessions* and glue them together with a steaming size of illicit love, thermal Roman baths, crowd-collecting disputations, and the like. Certainly the overly-pious would find it all too easy to make of Augustine's self-confessed liaison one long tract on the evils of sex off the yard. And what wonderful opportunities to introduce a domineering mother — aberrations can be hinted at for the delectation of the superficially read in psychology; also, what fine pickings in the *tolle, lege* episode for the psychology of religious experience freaks. The task of writing imaginatively about Saint Augustine is perhaps more complicated and dangerous than the task of writing about the average saint (although one must concede that Saint Francis's *tete-a-tetes* with burroes and jackdaws open up magnificent vistas).

It is the great merit of Mr. Henry Coray's book that it supplies the background and what might be called the "links" to Saint Augustine's life and neatly joins the fragments of the *Confessions* without distorting the picture Augustine himself has left, or leading the mind down a few interesting, but profitless, blind alleys. In Mr. Coray's book Saint Augustine's life is neither all white nor all black — it is properly variegated. Melanie, his mistress, is neither a raving beauty nor a drab; neither a homewrecker nor an outraged innocent. Monica, who is less skillfully drawn than the other characters in the book, never really emerges from the mosaic but lies palely two-dimensional on the floor, vaguely religious somehow, but hardly a power in Augustine's life. However, it must be said that she is drawn truly, if rather indistinctly; she is neither sickly sweet nor overly motherly, nor yet the harridan she might be presumed to have been from Saint Augustine's hints. She emerges, faintly, as a strong-willed woman whose main function is to keep alive the spark of what might be called "covenant consciousness" in her family.

Augustine himself, however, is Mr. Coray's best portrait: it is more than that; it is a living figure he gives us. Saint Augustine becomes a convincing citizen of North Africa and Rome in the fourth and fifth centuries, and Mr.

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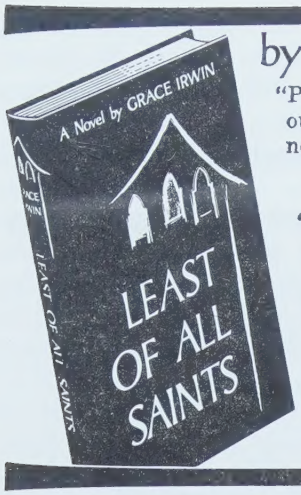

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Coray does an excellent job of p viding context for the *Confessions*, *City of God*, and the other writi of the African bishop. The religio intellectual, and political conflicts the time sketched in and also emb ied in a series of characters, who a made to speak in credible langua (as is Saint Augustine himse throughout: although one might pect a teacher of rhetoric to spe with just a bit of artificiality). Mr. Coray's treatment, Augustin progress from the near-paganism his youth, through the Manichaeis and scepticism of his later years, the conversion and the growing in sainthood and Christian wisdom a administrative skill of the Bishop Hippo, flows naturally from point point. Here is a plausible record of a individual spiritual and intellectu history, told from "within," in b lievable language. And the story itse seldom yields under the large weig of thought and history that it mu carry about.

Saint Augustine's difficulties wit his mistress, especially after Monic hears about her, are clearly an realistically described, a fact which this reviewer understands, caused th cancellation of some subscriptions t the church periodical in which th story first appeared). His grief at be ing separated from his mistress is en tirely credible — it is a real grief a the spiritual and physical separation of two lively and loving people. Mr Coray has put man's flesh on the shrunken cheeks of the African ascetic in the old engravings.

This book is, to this reviewer's mind, a successful re-creation of the life of a saint who has hitherto been suspended in a kind of continuum of intellectual and doctrinal history. The main weakness of the book is, perhaps, that Mr. Coray fails to show clearly Saint Augustine's manifest debt to the pagan and heretical learning which was his for the first half of his life. The book fails to show, for example, what effect his early rhetorical training had on his preaching

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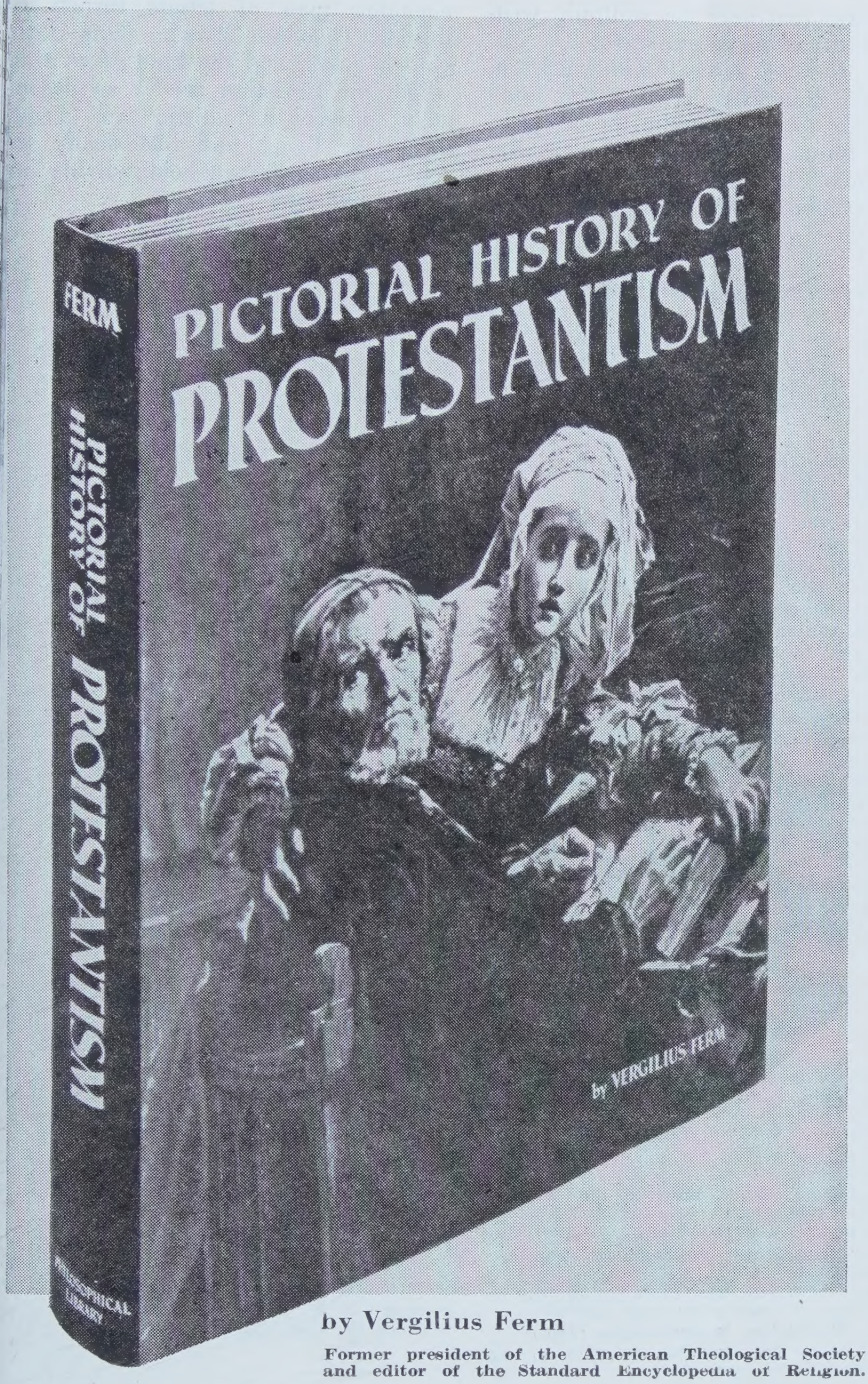

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